

Please accept this email to support maintaining one agency primarily devoted to the needs of CT citizens with visual impairments.

I am the principal of an elementary school in Ledyard where two students with significant visual impairment go to school. Both of them require specialized equipment and academic support. Educating these children has been an awesome journey that has included educating our staff and students about the varied accommodations we need to consider - specialized instruction, careful class placement, individual instructional strategies, specialized equipment needs and facility changes.

The guidance provided from BESB staff has been outstanding and not something we could replicate without their help.

As a public school employee and CT taxpayer, I am well aware of the challenges our current state government representatives are facing. There are likely departments that will be merged and consolidated. Since this agency has the expertise and resources, I would urge you to maintain the current level of coordinated support. For school ages students, maintaining incoming/outgoing expenses - especially considering the level of federal funding - under one office would be far more efficient than dispersing these to individual towns/cities where well meaning school personnel could easily waste time and money searching for equipment and supportive personnel.

This afternoon, one of our students' parents and her Braille transcriptionist will provide your committee with their perspective and concerns. Whatever decision is made, please do not compromise what students with visual impairments need to have fair access to instruction.

I appreciate your reading and considering my comments.

Mary Fort Boyle  
Ledyard Center School principal